



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305 • (415) 321-1200

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Department of Genetics  
Professor Joshua Lederberg

Dec. 31, 1969

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

Thank you for your letter and attachments. I am very appreciative of help\* in remaining up to date on such complex issues. I might even be the first to say that I am hardly an expert in this area -- but when I find the affected public even less well-informed, there is perhaps some merit in my attempting to draw some attention to such issues. My concern about rail safety per se is not negligible; I had also become interested in it as a prototype of even more complex problems of the allocation of responsibility for public protection.

The Congressional Record for Dec. 19 also just arrived and I was happy to have noted the amendment in the version of the bill passed by the Senate. It was not however reported, as far as I noticed, in the NY Times or Wall St. Journal or Wash. Post. Furthermore, may I mention (off the record) that 'my' editor at the San Francisco Chronicle thought my column of 12/20 was 'rather dull' and decided not to print it!

I mention these points because they do underly the problem of getting effective legislation. I have few suggestions, beyond what I have already documented as my own interest. Probably it would help if some of your people were to write for vehicles like Saturday Review or the N.Y. Times magazine. Or get Ralph Rader aboard!

Do you have any comment on 'absolute liability'? Do you have any information on the amount of 3'd-party injury from rail accidents, and what proportion of this was recoverable from carriers? I hope I did not err in my interpretation of present legal doctrine.

Sincerely,

LT. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE  
dedicated to the study of mental retardation

Molecular Biology    Heredity    Neurobiology    Developmental Medicine

\* Please do not hesitate to follow up